THE

Commonweal

Crisis of Conscience

LETTER TO FRANCE

by Francois Mauriac

Film History

THE MOVIES AS ART

by Frank Getlein

"A Sense of Age"

LONG ROAD TO BAGHDAD

by William Pfaff

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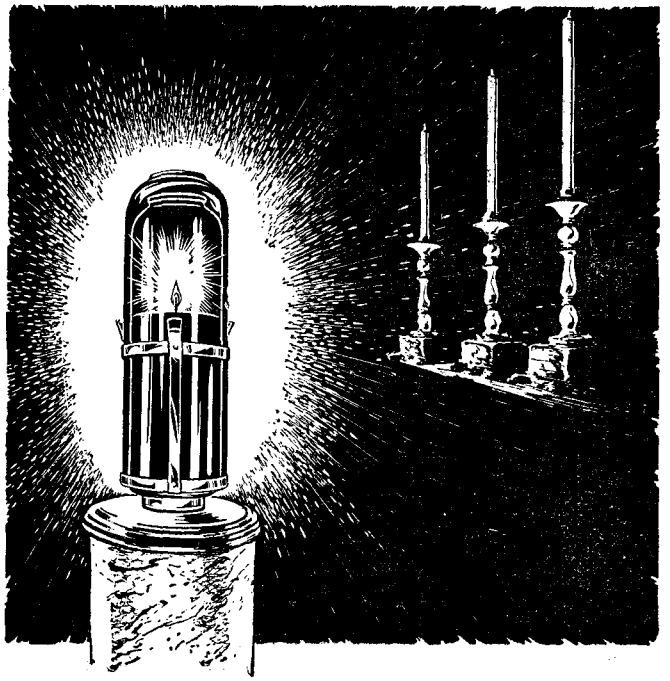
Like the Star Which Guided the Magi . . .



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THE
Commonweal
A Weekly Review of Public Affairs, Literature, and the Arts
THIRTY-SECOND YEAR OF PUBLICATION

week by week

CONTRASTS IN LIVING STANDARDS

MANY OF THE Americans who have been visiting foreign countries this summer are coming home with a renewed sense of national pride. They believe that this country stands up very well by comparison. Those who have spent any time in Mexico or other Latin American lands, along the Mediterranean, or in various colonies, have often been forcibly struck by the contrast between the ostentatious well-being of the few and the hard lives of the many beyond our borders. Visitors from the United States are startled to encounter such extreme luxury and dire poverty side by side. They have recourse to the gratifying realization that many million American families have a real, substantial share in our unparalleled national prosperity.

The extent of this wealth and this sharing cannot be denied. It can be stated without hesitation that never before in the history of any large nation has material well-being been so imposing and so widely distributed. To recognize this and to be grateful for the progress that has been registered in this direction during the past two decades is not to assume, however, that the task is at all close to completion. The slums in most of our big cities, distress areas in the Eastern coal regions, poverty in many parts of our South, the chronic plight of our migratory farm laborers, for instance, still constitute a major challenge to American ingenuity, to productive energies, and to truly democratic convictions.

In comparison with the results in many other countries, our over-all success in producing and distributing does look impressive. Perhaps the contrast between wealth and poverty is sharpest in Asia and Africa and, generally, in colonial or newly liberated lands. But it is also striking in many Latin American countries, in Spain, Portugal, France and Italy. It is no less true of the Soviet Union, where the members of the ruling bureaucracy have come to live on a scale far above that of the Russian masses. There is consistently less disparity in Canada, the British Isles and most of Northern Europe this side of the Iron Curtain. Yet, much of the time poverty constitutes the normal human lot in foreign lands.

THAT WE, in contrast, are producing so much for so many can inspire varying reactions. One is to confirm belief in our system, confidence in our superiority, impatience with others who are not intelligent enough to recognize and imitate our achievement. With this goes a tendency to leave to others problems which might be considered "of their own making."

Another view leads to a quite different conclusion. It derives no satisfaction at all from beholding abroad the extremes of poverty that are becoming less and less characteristic of the United States. For the world grows smaller by the day. We read in our newspapers of the needs of the most remote peoples. And the fact that the desperateness of their plight will affect the course of the cold war and the security of all freedom-loving nations gives an added urgency to each local crisis round the globe. It bears repeating in this connection that for a Christian all men are brothers with claims upon him which cannot be ignored. Because of the wealth, productive capacity and know-how of the United States, the task of raising abysmal living standards is a responsibility we truly share with the local authorities and business leaders of many lands.

The means of bringing American wealth and know-how into play in the underdeveloped or other-

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wise inefficiently productive and poverty-stricken areas of this earth are manifold. Individuals can generously contribute to the missions and to a wide range of private charitable agencies for this purpose. On the governmental level the process is infinitely more complex. We have to take into account such leading factors as national pride, untrustworthy or inept local officials, lethargic indifference to change on the part of the local inhabitants, the dangers of impairing going international trade relationships and many others. At times the vast complex of obstacles to effective help appears insuperable.

For this reason the agreement just signed between India and the United States appears to be a model for future reference. From an economic point-of-view it is mutually advantageous; that means, among other things, that it is so business-like as to appeal to Indian national pride. In the course of the next three years the arrangement is to make appreciable inroads into our unmanageable stockpiles of agricultural products. The wheat, rice and dairy products we ship to India will at the same time function as reserves against the threat of famine, which has ravaged populous sectors of that extensive sub-continent year after year. And we are supplying these essential food reserves in return for Indian currency, so that dollar balances will not be affected or inflation given a new impetus as a result.

Moreover, this agreement, involving more than a third of a billion dollars, gives a boost to the Indian economy at a most crucial moment. The second Five-Year Plan, which is about to be put into operation, has been undergoing the heaviest fire at home and abroad because of the debility of the present Indian economy and finances. Over fifty million dollars of the sum the United States is to receive in rupees for these surpluses of cotton, tobacco and foodstuffs will be returned to India as an outright grant; most of what remains of the total sum will then comprise a loan to India repayable to this country in forty years. Aid of this character and on this scale could hardly have been extended to India at a more propitious hour. The whole agreement reflects a welcome degree of statesmanship and a laudable sense of responsibility toward other peoples.

NEXT WEEK

ROBERT BARRAT writes about the various tensions of the Algerian crisis.

"In many French villages and cities families are receiving telegrams announcing that their sons have been killed in Algeria. Everyone wonders: 'How long will it last? Is this a new Indochina? Will it take seven years, and kill off the flower of French youth, to arrive at compromise terms which will be harsher for us than what we could obtain now by negotiations?' "

THE NEW REPUBLICANISM

MUCH HAS been said and written about "the new GOP" in the last few months, and we imagine there will be more rather than less of the same as the election draws nearer. The Donovan book on the Eisenhower Administration reported that Ike himself was so discouraged with the Republican Congress during his first two years in office that he seriously considered starting a new political party, but now, apparently, all such ideas have been shelved in favor of re-shaping the existing Republican Party. At the moment, the leading spokesman for the new Republicanism seems to be Arthur Larson, Undersecretary of Labor and author of *A Republican Looks At His Party*, whose thesis, in brief, is that the new GOP is the true party of the center. Mr. Larson's book so impressed Mr. Eisenhower that he is now one of the President's speechmakers, and the Republican appeal for support from the independent voter, a theme heavily stressed at San Francisco, will undoubtedly continue in the weeks ahead.

Like many other people, we are very interested in and sympathetic to President Eisenhower's efforts to re-make the GOP. But what puzzles us is the lack of debate on the matter in Republican ranks. Now that the official policy of the Party favors a "new Republicanism," does this mean that the old GOP is being disowned?

Although we are not sure exactly how one remakes a political party, we have a strong suspicion that it is not as easy as it sounds. If one judges by their voting records and public speeches, there must be many leading Republicans who would themselves like to re-make the present Party, although not in the direction indicated by Mr. Larson and President Eisenhower. We are thinking, for example, of Republicans like Senators Jenner, McCarthy, Dirksen, Welker, Bricker, and Malone, as well as Chairman of the GOP Policy Committee Styles Bridges and Minority Leader Knowland. Such men can hardly be described as Eisenhower

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Republicans, any more than Senator Eastland can be considered a Stevenson Democrat, and we cannot help wondering about the whereabouts and present feelings of all these gentlemen who are being re-made. They must, after all, privately regard Mr. Eisenhower as something of a Johnny-come-lately in Republican affairs, and it is hard to believe they take all this talk about his shaping the GOP in his own pattern with complete equanimity. If a few of them were really to cut loose between now and election, Mr. Larson might have to add another chapter to his book.

BANNING NUCLEAR TESTS

THE WHITE HOUSE announced the latest Soviet nuclear explosions, and took the occasion to contrast the secrecy of Soviet bomb experimentation with the responsible advance warning and information policy of the United States. There had been no "responsible" advance warning, of course, for the twenty-seven Japanese fishermen aboard the "Fortunate Dragon," the vessel caught ninety miles downwind in the radioactive fallout from a United States nuclear explosion in March, 1954. Before that time, this government's policy had been one of almost Soviet-like secrecy; the burned fishermen first announced to the world the dread consequences of radioactive fallout, and the shock to world opinion was, in effect, as great as the blast of the H-bomb itself.

As a consequence, most of the peoples in the world seem less concerned now with the issue of secrecy about such thermonuclear tests than with the issue of whether such nuclear explosions should be held at all. The Russians, in fact, have long urged a ban on such tests, even while they have been trying out bigger and bigger "bangs" within Siberia. The Soviet Union, of course, may be acting from less than the noblest of motives in urging such a ban, but there can be no questioning of the motives which have prompted Pope Pius, Prime Minister Nehru and Atomic Energy Commissioner Thomas Murray to urge just such a suspension of thermonuclear explosions.

These men are all similarly concerned: in the words of Pope Pius, their fear is that "too many nuclear explosions would, in time, cause an increased density of radioactive products in the atmosphere, whose diffusion depends on elements beyond man's control; thus would be generated conditions very dangerous for many living beings."

The official position of the United States regarding the question is expressed in a recent statement of the Atomic Energy Commission that "properly conducted nuclear tests do not constitute a hazard to human life and safety," and in a statement made by the United States delegation to the UN Disarmament Commission which links a ban on nuclear tests "to the larger question of agreeing on a meaningful disarmament program."

Against this two-fold position of the Administration, arguments can, of course, be brought. Thus, an Atomic Energy Commission scientist, Dr. John Wolfe, has recently declared that the Commission's view on nuclear testing represents an unjustifiably optimistic view of "the potential hazard," and a scientific study just released by India corroborates Dr. Wolfe's opinion that "we are still ignorant of the true scale of the hazard."

Against the Administration's position that the question of nuclear tests is "necessarily related" to that of effectively inspected disarmament, it has been pointed out that the two problems can be kept distinct, since it is impossible to conceal the setting off of a nuclear explosion—an argument confirmed by the fact that the United States has reported the number, date, size and location of the nuclear tests conducted by the Soviet Union on an increasing scale since 1949.

Against this background, Adlai Stevenson has twice called for this country to take the lead in announcing a ban on further nuclear explosions. Such a ban would, he suggested, assure the world of our desire for peace, be consistent with our moral traditions, exhibit a "decent respect for the opinions of mankind" and force the Soviet Union to an acid test of its often-proclaimed desire for "nuclear peace."

To date, Mr. Stevenson's suggestion has met, for the most part, with a strange response. A few Administration spokesmen have dismissed it without seeming to have understood it; the majority have wrapped it in silence and shelved it. We are not sure that Mr. Stevenson is right in this proposal; we are sure, however, that it deserves more serious discussion than it has yet received. It may be good for little political mileage to either party during the campaign, but it is, assuredly, a basic issue to place before the American people.

"HELL SHIP"

DURING THE SUMMER of 1954, the U.S. Immigration Service began an all-out drive against illegal entrants from Mexico. No one knows

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for sure how many Mexican wetbacks there are in this country at any given time, but two years ago the Immigration Service was picking up an average of three thousand a day. This summer that figure has declined to a little over one hundred a day, and on this score, at least, U.S. officials seem justified in considering their efforts successful. Now, however, a serious question has arisen about the treatment of the Mexican wetbacks while they are in the custody of the United States.

Many of the illegal entrants are transported back into Mexico by sea, and for this purpose the United States has been using a boat chartered from a Mexican firm. Reports now indicate that the vessel was never intended to carry passengers and, in fact, still transports bananas rather than people on its return trip to the North. For the trip from Texas to Veracruz, the wetbacks are said to be jammed into the hold under abysmal conditions, with highly inadequate sanitary facilities and very little light. The extent of overcrowding on board is indicated by the fact that in the event of emergency there would only be room for about one-tenth of the deportees in the lifeboats available, and newspaper stories which refer to a "hell ship" do not seem to be exaggerated.

Bad as conditions are, the entire affair might never have come to light if it had not been forcibly called to public attention by a riot aboard the ship, in which thirty-six persons are said to have jumped overboard and four to have drowned. Such reports have led Representative Robert H. Mollohan, chairman of a House Government Operations subcommittee, to order a full-scale inquiry into the way the Immigration Service is conducting its deportation proceedings, and such an investigation is certainly in order. The wetbacks who enter the U.S. in search of work may be breaking the law, but there is no excuse for this kind of treatment.

LABOR CODE OF ETHICS

ONE GOOD by-product of the tragic Riesel case has been increased attention to the problem of racketeer-infiltration into labor unions. In this connection, two recent steps by the Executive Council of the AFL-CIO deserve commendation. First of all, President George Meany warned three national unions that they face suspension from the parent organization on charges of "corrupt influences." In this, the Executive Council by unanimous vote followed the recommendations of its Ethical Practices Committee, the chairman of which is Mr. Al Hayes of the International Association of Machinists and the vice-chairman of which is Mr. David Dubinsky of the International Ladies Garment Workers. At the same time, the Executive Council issued a code of ethics to govern the issuance of local union charters; this was a direct blow at the practice of issuing "paper charters" which racketeers have sometimes used to gain control of a union. Both of these actions by the Executive Council are definite forward steps, and the full convention of the AFL-CIO should give Mr. Meany and the Executive Council full support in the task of implementing these and other necessary measures.

FACT AND FANCY

THERE IS a tragic irony in the announcement that the United States Information Agency is now distributing to eighty countries a pamphlet which describes the contributions which immigrants have made to this country, and relates how warmly the United States welcomes such immigrants to its shores.

The irony, of course, lies in the fact that the Walter-McCarran Immigration Act makes a mockery of the pamphlet. The United States has profited immeasurably by the contributions of immigrants —many of them famous, most of them obscure. But, had it been in force, the Walter-McCarran Act would have barred many of these same "contributors" from our shores, including several distinguished immigrants singled out for special mention in the U.S.I.A. pamphlet.

The Eisenhower Administration has, it is true, urged some liberalization of the Act's basically racist provisions, but it came into the fight too lazily and late, and left it too soon.

The Senate, it is true, in the last hours of its last session, passed a measure over the protests of Senator Eastland, staunch defender of the purity of Anglo-Saxon blood; but Representative Walter effectively blocked the passage of this measure in the House.

In view of the hard facts regarding current immigration, we hope that, in addition to some eighty countries, the U.S.I.A. will send copies of its pamphlet to some eighty members of Congress, with the names of Senator Eastland and Representative Walter leading the list. These gentlemen might find it interesting and informative to read of this nation's immense debt to the immigrants—of the past, the dead past.

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Letter to France

"I, TOO, HAVE MADE CHRIST A PRISONER OF A CERTAIN LIMITED WAY OF THINKING AND FEELING"

FRANÇOIS MAURIAC

A BREAK has been created in the Christian conscience between the order of charity, in which everyone strives to attain God, and the political order, which has its own laws—the first of which is based on a refusal to believe that the word of God carries binding moral obligations or that no human victims should be surrendered to the demands of the will to power. This has been observable in past times with the Christian kings and now with the democracies, which are very Christian also. But I will not cast the first stone.

Louis XIV, I imagine, read the Sermon on the Mount without flicking an eyelid while his soldiers were putting the Palatinate to fire and the sword. And we ourselves, not only those who were in positions of power, were reading the Beatitudes no less devoutly while blood flowed in Madagascar and Indochina.

Quite unwittingly, we have all remained attentive to another sermon, not a written one, which has not ceased to echo since Satan showed the Son of Man from the pinnacle of the temple the kingdoms of this world and their glory. "Blessed are the strong! Blessed are the hard of heart! Blessed are those who scoff at Justice and deliver the innocent to the torturer; who order their police to fire on the poor. For theirs is the kingdom of earth."

Well, no. The kingdom of earth is not attained through force. Men do not win it that way when they speak in the name of a nation such as ours, for which to put into practice the law of brute force in the service of Mammon is not only to go counter to the Gospel, but also to go against our vocation to justice which is recognized by all peoples. This is so true that whenever we violate this vocation we commit a crime against all humanity and, in addition, commit a folly which is the greatest of all follies.

In the end, according to the promises made on the Mount, the earth will belong to the meek, and this truth, impregnated with mystery, has become a political truth in India (thanks to Gandhi, who himself stated that he derived this secret from the Sermon on the Mount). This mysterious truth has become politically true and we are beginning to glimpse what a just and pure policy in North Africa would be. I have fought for this, not because it would have been a successful policy. But French political leaders have always commended such a policy, not because they are Christians but because they are intelligent.

IT HAS frequently been said, and I was among the first to say it, that our nation is now greatly reduced in stature. But the standards by which we would measure such national prestige are precisely those which as Christians we must reject. Our status is reduced in comparison with those times when the will to power which had taken hold of the French nation enslaved peoples in order to extend our civilization. And even the preaching of the Gospel was then linked to the spirit of conquest.

National prestige of this sort is so hard for us not to admire. I myself am far from insensible to many of the attractions of a noble civilization embarked on conquest. Especially when it is our Western civilization. During a large part of my life I yielded to the temptation to confuse the destiny of Catholicism with that of the West, with a certain order, a certain tongue. I, too, have made Christ a prisoner of a certain limited way of thinking and feeling. We have taken away Our Lord and the rest of the world does not know where we have laid Him. Captors of Christ, we thought we were evangelizing the world; we have, in fact, been colonizing it. But in my advanced years I have discovered where the grandeur of our time lies and that it is to make Christ, if I may say so, communicable to the rest of the world.

If at last we find the strength and the courage to attack that wall which separates spiritual life from political life for us, perhaps we shall recognize that political truth exists, and that, as all truth, it comes from the Father and therefore is universal and accessible to every race and nation.

Christian civilization does not exist; it has never existed. But every civilization since the appearance of

François Mauriac is the well known French writer, author of *Woman of the Pharisees*, *The Desert of Love*, and many other novels.

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the Son of Man is in labor. The interminable birth pangs of the Kingdom of God are accompanied by blood and tears—that birth is the goal toward which Christian civilization is led—and our generation, humiliated as it is, is perhaps closer to that Kingdom than the apparently more glorious centuries in which Catholicism triumphed formally.

Moreover, the temporal grandeur of France is closely bound to her spiritual mission. The more this realization motivates the political conduct of French Catholics, the more our civilization will have the right to call itself Christian.

Not everyone, of course, has a political vocation. A Christian civilization is not made by politicians and journalists. Hidden lives nourish it—virtue that exists in secret, daily Communions and the manifold presence of grace among small and humble worshippers in spirit and in truth. But politics is the vocation of those of us who have the ability to come forward and make our voices heard, a vocation for which we often have little stomach and one which imposes on us the problems of our nation's politics—these problems which, I believe more and more, God bestows on us to guide us with His own hand.

Our nation's misfortunes of these last few years and, to speak only of the latest of them, the drama of North Africa, will not have been wholly in vain if French Catholics finally come to understand what, in my opinion, is the key to a genuinely Christian civilization: it is the fact that political wisdom is not separated from that wisdom which was taught from the Mount. When the meek were promised that they would possess the earth and those who thirst after justice that they would have their fill, this promise was also addressed to the nations of the world and to our nation in particular.

Yes, to France. Since I have been caught up in the happenings in North Africa, I have come to believe in France's vocation. I have talked to men who have come from our prisons still bearing the marks of what they have suffered there, and heard them speak to me of France with love and sorrow. Then I understood the repute which we enjoy in spite of everything; then I perceived what abominable things could be done to all men in our name. Our stamp is like the eternal seal which marks a priest no matter what he does. There is a sort of national ordination which forcibly strikes even those who suffer at the hands of France. To say that I believe this is not enough; I know it.

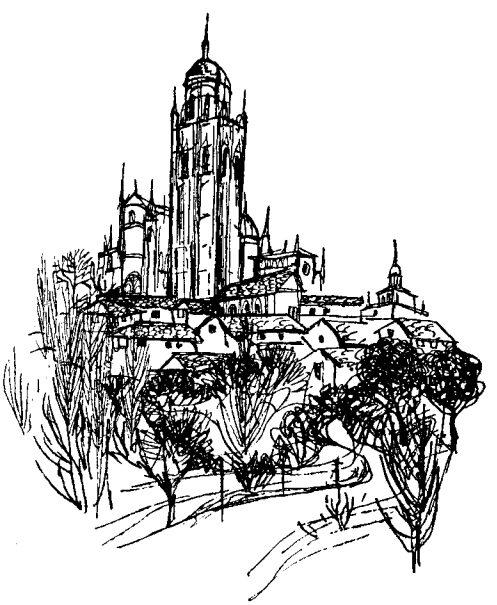
WHAT IS to be done, then? Each of us must strive to harmonize his own personal vocation with the universal vocation of France. In this way we shall aid in that great work which has never been accomplished, and which tends to make a Christian civilization out of a civilization as pagan in appearance as our own, by means of a deep interior current, by a *burning presence,* to use an expression of Mounier's.

Let us not deceive ourselves: what I propose here is difficult. Strange as it may seem, a French Catholic has a great deal of difficulty in making his own political action coincide with the spiritual vocation of his country. Although for sixty years we have been clambering up a steep slope, we are still victims of the same sinister ambiguity which from the time of the Dreyfus affair kept the bulk of the French Catholics on the side of the false accusers and mobilized them against an innocent man.

To be sure, an immense progress has been achieved since then. That does not prevent the parties of Christian inspiration, those whose adherents are Catholics in the majority, from being drawn still—and they draw us with them—along paths far from the Mount of the Beatitudes.

Each of us should respond to these questions for himself and resolve them accordingly to his conscience and in the presence of God. But let us realize that a Christian civilization does not mean one in which the parties in power serve the temporal interests of the Church on this point or that, however important or respectable those interests may seem to us. A Christian civilization is rather one which tends to treat men everywhere and of whatever race with the respect due that flesh which once clothed the Son of Man and which was crucified with Him.

Which amounts to saying that the dominant trait of a Christian civilization is that of being human. Let us tear the Gorgon's mask from France's countenance. Let us restore her human visage. When France becomes her true self, she will possess the earth because she will possess the hearts of men.



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Long Road to Baghdad

WILLIAM PFAFF

PEOPLE LIKE to say that modern transportation and communications have made the world smaller. They have done that, but, more important, they have created a demi-world; they have set a shell of modernity around another world. The airports are everywhere the same. The handsome terminals at Acapulco, Beirut and Augusta might be interchanged with no one really noticing. The clerks at the airline counters in Mexico City and Cairo are brothers, speaking the same accented, adequate English.

It might be said that this is part of a more general trend that isolates the well-to-do people of Europe and America from the more elemental society from which we came. This other society is no better, certainly is less agreeable, than our world of television, Oldsmobiles (and Renaults), suburban homes and the DC-7, but it is the world from which we came, and which continues to exist under the shell, both here and abroad. There is a certain value, I believe, in trying to put down something of the light and the darkness that exist on the other side of a rather formidable barrier.

THE ROAD to Baghdad really began for me at the Pyramids, because there too the dead past is palpable. We have lived with the antiquities of Europe, but the Pyramids are as affecting as the paleolithic cave murals. They are as affecting as seeing Pygmies. One has a sharp and chill sense of age, of the extent of man. One feels the classic sense of the layers of time.

Then came Alexandria, Caesar's town. The street is wide, facing the Mediterranean. I had a beer there at a sidewalk café. At the next table a girl and two men talked in English about some popular sheet music they had bought. Then they got into their open car and drove off, bright and charming. The restaurant kept an old man with a switch to patrol the hedge. He shooed off the shoeshine men and a begging old woman in black who hissed and cursed at him. One shoeshine man got in momentarily while the elderly sentry was around the corner. He pulled his customer's shoes off and quickly carried them to the sidewalk. When they were shined, the disgruntled sentry took them to the patron and carried the money to the pleased infiltrator.

When I went to the ship that was to carry me to Beirut I had a suitcase, a small canvas bag, a portable typewriter, and the undisguisable American face. The taxi stopped at the gate to the wharf and a short, dark man popped into the front seat. The soldier guarding the gate closed the door behind him and leaned in the rear window to tell me: "He will show you."

When we stopped, the little man gathered up my luggage and pointed to the passport office. "You go there first." I got my passport stamped and came out. He was holding only the typewriter. My two bags each had acquired a porter. Our caravan started for the second office. My man handed the typewriter over to the porter who bore the handbag. We passed large signs clearly indicating the way. Our leader pointed: "We wait in the shade." More stamps. "How long were you in Egypt?" asked the earnest young army officer who supervised the office. "A week." "Too short. Too short. You must come this winter and stay longer. Summer is not a good time of year to visit Egypt." The small man had his head in the window. "Come on, come on!" he cried. "I hope you liked Egypt," the officer said. "Very much." He saluted cordially.

The bags went on the customs counter. A Sidney Greenstreet in mufti fingered them as he looked me over. "How much cash?" "What?" "How much cash?" he asked with the patience of one accustomed to dealing with the obtuse.

"You mean how much currency or how much in travelers' checks?"

"How much cash?"

"You've got my currency form there. It says how much I brought in and how much I spent."

"How much cash do you have?"

"Look. Off-hand I don't know exactly. Subtract that amount from the total. The rest is what I am taking out."

He studied the form, and then said: "How much cash do you have?"

I capitulated. "Here's a hundred dollars in checks," I said, pulling out one wallet. "And I've got another wallet with some more in it."

"Fine," he said, and wrote down $100.

I opened my bags. "Any gold?" he asked.

"No."

"Any farce?"

"I'm sorry, I don't understand."

"Any farce?"

Mr. Pfaff, formerly an associate editor of The Commonweal, is now a member of the news staff of the American Broadcasting Company.

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"Look, I'm sorry. . . ."

My little man shoved against me. "Any farce? Any farce? Any *farce?*"

I looked at one and then the other.

"*What* are farce?"

"Farce, farce," my man said, covering his shoulders with an imaginary mink stole.

"No farce," I said.

The customs man ran his hands around the inside of my suitcase and found my toilet case, keystone of my packing. He wrenched it out, opened it, rummaged among Ipana and Burma-Shave and ran his appraising finger over the bristles of my toothbrush.

"OK," he said, turning to the handbag. "Anything here to declare?"

"There's a camera, a raincoat and a dirty shirt."

"No gold?"

"No gold."

He chalked both bags, I jammed them shut, and my team shouldered them. The ship was about two hundred yards from the customs house. "First class," my man announced.

"No. Third."

"First?"

"No. Third. Three." Three fingers.

"OK. You pay now."

I gave my guide twenty piastres.

"Oh, no," he said. "You have American money?"

"No."

"Make it sixty for everything, them and me."

I gave him sixty, and he walked with us for another thirty yards, counting the money.

"Well, I go now. They take care of you. Goodbye. Good luck." He put out his hand and I shook it. "Fine. Goodbye," he said.

Then he added, "that man with the big bag. You give him something extra. He needs it."

THE SHIP. Here the first-third business was repeated with the steward. Third-class passengers do not usually arrive with three servants. The vessel was a Greek mixed freight-passenger ship which made the milk-and-newspapers local run around the Arab ports of the Eastern Mediterranean. It traveled slowly and complacently at night, and loaded and unloaded during crashing, dirty hours of daylight. From Alexandria overnight to Port Said, where we took on oil. I stood on the boat deck with the other passengers and watched the great pipe snaked out on barges and the oil pumped aboard. As we watched, my fellow-passengers smoked and tossed their cigarettes into the oil-smudged sea. I reflected on this a bit, and then committed my soul to God and lit up.

Overnight to Cyprus, and a brief visit to that beige, sunny, violent island. We walked around the port town of Limassol and thought we must have missed the main part of town. Consulting a map, we found we had missed nothing. So we sat on some steps across from the dock, cracked peanuts, and tried to feed candy to a trio of reluctant children.

Then overnight to Beirut—whose snow-touched mountains are visible from Cyprus. Third class was small and clean, and located behind the galley. You know you are third class when you have to pass the galley to go to your quarters. And ships' galleys all have exactly the same rich stink, unique, fatal to the potentially seasick.

Third was not the lowest class. The afterdeck was jammed with deck passengers who had brought folding chairs or sleeping bags or blankets and paper bags full of fruit and bread. The Mediterranean summer nights are clear and warm. At ports, vendors would come aboard with watermelons and leather goods for sale. One tiny barefoot Egyptian, wizened and sunburned black, had a single melon for sale. When the ship was prepared to sail his melon was unsold. He stayed on, shuffling about, pulling at people's sleeves. Then the bosun spotted him, lifted him up off the deck by the armpits and flung him into the arms of a sailor who shoved him, screaming in protest, down the gangplank.

Among the deck passengers were old women wrapped in black veils, who sat on one bag with their arms embracing their other possessions; there was a hearty Saudi Arabian, unshaven, wearing an embroidered skullcap and a burnoose of what appeared to be sensible brown seersucker, a favorite of all the children aboard; a party of workcamp-bound students that included two young Englishmen with great shaggy beards, opaque hornrimmed glasses, and wretched khaki shorts, seemingly just off the Matterhorn, actually two weeks away from Cambridge. They had tents up on the fantail and dried laundry in the sun while they read. Proust? Or St. John Philby?

Religion was represented by a French Franciscan in sandals, two shy French nuns, and an eminence of Greek Orthodox priests, one of them with long hair prudently restrained from the periodic gusts of wind by rubber bands.

In first class there was an expensively dressed Levantine who manipulated a black cigarette holder eleven inches long, and a turbaned Indian who wore a hairnet around his beard. I shared my cabin with a professor of engineering from Cairo University and a cheerful deaf Belgian who would talk endlessly and when you replied would smile encouragingly and indicate that he couldn't hear a word. The third was a young Palestinean refugee who worked for the UN in Cairo and was going to visit his mother in Lebanon. The only other Americans aboard were two girls who taught at a once-Protestant Turkish academy and were proud that they

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got along without the commissary luxuries relied upon by all the government people in the Middle East.

Ship's announcements were delivered in Greek, Arabic, French and English and, for all the virtuosity, made small impression. Debarkation was pandemonium. The strong got out first, throwing back the struggling ranks of porters coming aboard. The weak followed, supporting the casualties. We happy few Anglo-Saxons stood aside to make smug comments on how things might be organized.

BAGHDAD. From modern Beirut, with its beach better than the best the south of France can offer, and its Chryslers and fine hotels and peace, the road climbs into the mountains past dandelion-like pines, then down again to Damascus, a great, clean, cool, Rome-like city, the last survivor of a world we cannot know.

From here the road goes East. First you follow the plain in the shadow of the mountains. The country flattens out. It is wasteland, but not desert as we think of desert. And the sun goes down; the mountains are only silhouettes cutting the yellow substance of the sun. The land is still and barren, full of waist-high rocks distributed almost geometrically, looking like the debris of an astounding hailstorm.

The bus, a semi-trailer van pulled by a diesel truck, rocked and lurched along a trail several hundred yards wide, marked by cairns. As the distance from Damascus lengthened there were occasional sheep and—nearer Damascus — camels at Bedouin encampments. The last Syrian outpost is a Zinderneuf-like fort called Abdu el Chamat. After it was passed, dinner was served—a box dinner of fruit, dates and hard cheese sandwiches. I went first class, which meant that the bus was refrigerated and the seats were canvas slings. You could order a drink from the steward and even drink most of it before it spilled.

At midnight there was a stop at the oasis of Rubat Wells. A hut, a gas tank, and two rickety tables with teapots and cups stacked on them. The only light came from the bus and some lanterns, and the open sky. Because of the poverty of artificial light, the sky was seen for what it is. The stars were tangible, and there were more of them than the civilized world dreams possible. The Milky Way is indeed spilled milk, an infinite ivory swath through the sky. The desolation of the landscape gave one an intuition, too, of being on another star.

At dawn the bus was lifting dust like a banner. The landscape was white. Because of the dust the sky was white too. It is a deathly world. Occasionally we passed a pattern of ruined walls of white clay, a deserted village or hunting lodge. It was about eight when we entered a desert town of clay buildings, flat-roofed with pole rafters protruding from the sides, each building interlocking with the others by a pattern of walls. The women who watched us go by were in black and pulled veils across their faces, which gave them a curious headless appearance. The bus stopped at a guesthouse for tea. A blind boy of about twelve was standing by

the gates holding a staff. His eyes were rolled up or diseased so that only slits of white could be seen, as though you looked through cracks to his mind. His lips were moving, not in the way of rambling idiots, but as though he were considering some problem.

Then the bus moved through country which had patches of yellow-green and some livestock. We crossed the Euphrates shortly before noon. Then there was the Tigris and we were in Baghdad.

ONE OF THE passengers on the bus was a young Armenian, a national of Iran, a prospective engineering student at New York University. When water was passed, he refused to honor tradition and demanded a clean glass. When it came, he irritably rubbed its lip with his fingers.

"Common glass. Common towel. The East is filthy with disease and we wonder why! The East is a century behind!"

But just a century ago Charles M. Doughty wrote from a Bedouin camp somewhere between Damascus and Mecca: "Arabia of our days has the aspect of a decayed country. All nations once trafficked for her gold and the sacred incense, to Arabia the happy. Today the round world has no need for the daughter of Arabia; she is forsaken and desolate."

Forsaken, no. There is oil now. But there is desolation. The government of Iraq does not like to have squalor written about; to write about it is to strengthen the plushy clichés which Americans believe about the hopeless East and its medieval rulers. But Iraq insists that to write of what is uncorrected because as yet it cannot be corrected is unjust; it is the nation which is using its oil royalties more intelligently and constructively than any other in Asia Minor. There has

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been a most respectable and responsible national effort in education and medicine.

I was in Baghdad in July. An average July temperature—nights counted in—is 97 degrees. A common daytime temperature—in the shade—is 114 degrees. The heat is a solid. You feel its texture. I had one hour of cool, in the State Museum, an earth-floored, cavern-like building containing the astounding relics of Mesopotamia and Babylon and Ur—the earliest evidence of civilization. In their day the world's center was here. In the day of the Islamic empire, the world began at Baghdad. The soul of the world, or perhaps it would better be called the constructive genius of the world, is only a visitor. It was here six thousand years ago and stayed longer than it now has visited with those of us who live in the West. But eventually it slipped Westward. It journeyed down the Mediterranean to call at Italy and Greece and France and Spain and Britain. Behind, it left the artifacts, the empty house open to the winds and the sand. The house was desolate in the late Middle Ages when the Arab empire cracked and broke apart. Where it had been, the people still lived as they had lived, but *it* was gone. The wheel stopped turning.

Now, oil lines cross the great deserts. The civilizations live on top of one another like geological ages. The veins of one crack through to the next. The streets of Baghdad, by the museum of relics, have the copper of medieval luster, the craft of the time when this was the center of the world. And they have an astounding and varied collection of Victorian British junk. Here is the debris of Marx's Manchester. I remember in one shop the lithograph showing two Dickensian men, one aghast before an empty safe, crying "I sold for credit!", the other obviously prosperous with bright weskit and cigar, saying "*I* sold for cash!"

The American and the European must lose his virtue in this Baghdad. They have a threshold of pity and Baghdad breaches it. There are old women who pluck at your clothes as you pass. There are women wrapped in black, sitting in the dust, only a hand with begging bowl sticking out of the heap of shiny black. There are little girls who rush up to clutch you by the hand and cry, "Money please. Money please. Have no money. Very hungry." All this exhausts whatever pity you have until you are almost indifferent. But you cannot really be indifferent. When I saw a child, a girl, crawling on her hands and knees through the street crowds, blind, crippled, dragging a begging bowl in her hand, I went back to my squalid hotel and wondered if there is any purpose in recording this, in adding to the stereotype of the East by telling horror stories. I concluded that it must do some good to tell horror stories, even if they prove no point, establish no generalization, other than the generalization that America and Europe are not real but dreams.

FILM HISTORY

The Movies As Art

FRANK GETLEIN

AT THE END of its seventy-fifth anniversary year, Marquette University presented last spring a rare opportunity for the student of the American movie. The occasion was the University's Festival of the American Arts, an ambitious program embracing contemporary chamber music, jazz, choral music, drama, and a survey of American painting of the last seventy-five years. The program concluded with the first public American performance of a sixteen-year-old film—a document produced by the Museum of Modern Art, *Une Brève Histoire du Cinéma Américaine*.

Originally produced for an international film exposition in Paris, the *Brève Histoire* had not been shown in this country for sound business reasons: it is composed of excerpts from twenty-three films, the owners of which have never agreed at the same time on the wisdom of donating to scholarship what might yet have possibilities of further profit. Marquette, through The Motion Picture Association, was able to obtain the necessary releases. In view of the enthusiastic reception accorded the film by two capacity audiences at Marquette, it is to be hoped that the various copyright owners will conclude in the near future that a record reminding the public that the movies' past is a distinguished one, cannot harm their present.

The Museum of Modern Art's broad policy, "Let the material speak for itself," is conspicuous in the *Brève Histoire*. Overt editorial comments are almost completely absent from the printed titles preceding each of the film's three sections. It is in the choice and

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juxtaposition of the scenes taken from movies from 1894 to 1940 that the development of the American movie is shown.

On the other hand the *Brève Histoire* is not without its limitations nor is the title entirely accurate. The film is less a history of the American cinema than it is a record of the evolution of that cinema as an art form. This, of course, is an entirely legitimate approach to the subject, but it does tend to ignore the true nature of the American movie and to substitute for its profound sociological and cultural significance a kind of ideal aesthetic of the form.

Thus, the "personality concept" of American film actors is totally ignored. From the point of view of the movies as art, this course is thoroughly justified, since, crudely speaking, the more personality in films, the less art, and vice versa. Personality, at least in the movies, is the destruction of art, seeking necessarily the obliteration of that aesthetic distance between subject and object which is essential to the experience of art. Personality, nevertheless, has been the guiding principle for a whole generation of movie-makers and not to mention it in a "history" is to speak falsely.

LIKE TELEVISION, the movies made their entrance on the American scene as a mechanical novelty. As ten years ago grown men and women sat entranced before preposterous wrestling matches on the home screen, so in 1894 audiences were apparently delighted with the thinnest excuses for motion pictures. "The Execution of Mary, Queen of Scots," by Thomas Edison, merely presented the lady mounting the platform, kneeling, and getting her head whacked off. "The Kiss," also by the wizard of Menlo Park, confined itself to a single, simpering performance of a kiss.

Very early in the pioneer period covered by the first section of *Brève Histoire,* the motion picture found its form and almost at the same time its first great artist. It's form is fiction, the artist was D. W. Griffith. The celebrated "Great Train Robbery," almost ten years before Griffith's initial impact as a director, established once and for all the fictional form as opposed to the historical episode or the mechanical novelty. Technically crude, aesthetically primitive, the picture, even today, creates and maintains narrative interest.

It remained for Griffith to discover almost the complete vocabulary of the language in which the motion picture tells its story. The first section ends with a long excerpt from his masterpiece, "The Birth of a Nation," (1915). Griffith invented the close-up for subtle emotional and narrative effects. Before Griffith, film actors communicated largely in very broad gestures, signifying unmistakably what they were intended to signify but never involving more than a kind of universal sign language. After Griffith, the expression is direct; Lillian Gish does not semaphore to us that she feels sorrow; rather, she feels it, and we share it. Griffith also broke the camera loose from its hitherto fixed position, and made it move with the action it recorded.

His supreme achievement, however, was unquestionably his perfection of editing, or cutting, as the very heart of the motion picture's technical form. All of these advances served to define the new form as "pictures which move." Significantly, much of the dullness evident in the contemporary wide-screen film can be traced directly to its primitive, pre-Griffith toleration of the fixed camera and minimal cutting.

Visual composition was certainly not an invention of Griffith's, but he brought it to a perfection which has not been surpassed and is rarely equaled. It was first evident as a deliberate factor in the first Western, "The Fugitive" (1914), in a climactic scene in which the white desert is used as ground for the moving point of the fleeing cowboy and for the compositional and emotional black line described by that point. Even in such simplicity the essence of visual composition for the motion picture is clear: the visual artist composes in time as well as space. Composition is not a series of *tableaux vivants,* but a continuous, progressing "picture that moves."

In his epic of the Civil War, Griffith composed with masses of men and a wide and varied countryside, as well as with smaller groups, simple objects, and, above all, film itself. In the burning of Atlanta sequence, he split his screen on a horizontal diagonal never precisely defined and always kept for the spectator the juxtaposition of the movement of history in the great mass maneuvers and the individual anguish of history's victims.

A TOO-LITTLE-known fact about early movies was also made clear in the Marquette showing of the "silent" first two sections of the Museum's film. Except in the very beginning, there was never any such thing as a "silent movie." The University procured the services of a piano-player who, in his youth, had worked in a movie house. His contribution was enormous, and emphasized the strong visual rhythm of the motion picture. Rhythm in music, the dance and the motion picture is the ordering of time; its presence as an important factor stresses again the profound concern of the motion picture with time. As the beat in music in some sense echoes and therefore captures the pulse of the dancers, so visual rhythm, with its musical underlining, helps to make the motion picture a kind of time-machine, a precise mechanical voyage in time to which the spectator is linked by the very beat of his heart.

This fact was made unmistakably clear in the second section of the *Brève Histoire,* which opened with the absolute control of Charlie Chaplin and closed with the totally mechanical rhythm of Mickey Mouse.

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Buster Keaton, in an excerpt from "The General" (1927), reveals that beyond the celebrated deadpan technique and the appealing character of the resourceful weakling, his genius, too, was essentially rhythmic, a matter of exquisite visual timing, actually more subtle and complex than Chaplin's. Chaplin's beat is highly musical, lending itself very readily to a translation of movement, gesture and facial expression into whole notes, quarter notes and so on, including rests. Keaton's is primarily a narrative beat expressed in a clear time-pattern of dilemma, solution, frustration, achievement, dilemma.

Erich von Stroheim's "Greed" (1924), while strong in rhythm, composition, narrative and editing, was chiefly distinctive for its masterful use of still another inflection in the grammar of the film, visual symbolism. The German master brought to America an intense awareness of the commonplace poetic tool derived from the various meanings or the various depths of meaning discernible in a single image. Thus, in the gargantuan wedding feast sequence, von Stroheim effectively contrasts the bride, a fragile and lovely Zasu Pitts, with her family and its guests, and also uses the feast both to symbolize her fear and trembling at the sexuality of marriage and to comment on the entire society within which the events take place and which is summed up in the title.

The final forty-five minute section of *Brève Histoire* deals with breaking through the sound barrier and the successful subordination of this new element to the larger purposes of the motion picture. In its first artistically serious assault on sound, the motion picture took over, whole, Eugene O'Neill's *Anna Christie* (1929). The wonderful, boozy lines of the saloon scene and Marie Dressler's inspired delivery temper one's irritation with the definite cinematic retrogression which the scene represents. We are back to the relatively immobile camera and to a very definite delight in words for their own sake. The mitigation is that the words are worth hearing for their own sake, but we are dealing with the whole paraphernalia of movie making used as an instrument for recording rather than as a tool of creation.

With "Little Caesar," the motion picture takes advantage of the monosyllabic, laconic speech pattern of the American gangster to use dialogue as a contributing means rather than an end. And in the Marx Brothers' "A Day at the Races," dialogue is so thoroughly mastered that it can become a kind of end in itself; the paradox is explained in the sparkling stream-of-consciousness, free-association dialogue used by the Brothers. It is an intellectual delight to follow; the technique is not purely verbal but spills over constantly into image and action; and while thoroughly acceptable as an end in itself, it is always making a definite contribution to the adventure in speed and the release from the law of intellectual gravity which constitute the specialty of the house.

The third section of *Histoire* ends with a long excerpt from Pare Lorentz's documentary plea for flood control, "The River." The effect, however, is that this final film seems appended less as a part of the sound section than as a futilely hopeful epilogue to the entire production. "The River" uses all the resources of the film as narrative fiction and uses them brilliantly: The narration is poetry, and the Virgil Thompson score is an uneasy building up of the rains of spring to flood and panic. Both are thoroughly integrated and subordinate to the cinematographic experience. The main line of the sequence is in the precise photography and the inexorable and ominous build-up, produced by editing, from raindrop to full flood. As an example of "pure cinema"—the power and movement of film technique and artistry with neither actors nor fiction—"The River" remains unsurpassed.

Its position, however, at the end of the *Brève Histoire,* carries the inaccurate implication that it is toward this inspired political documentary form that the movie has evolved. On the contrary, this special form is a sideline, and while in the thirties it produced some brilliant examples, historically it has been a dead end. A more valid interpretation of the cinematic significance of "The River" is that, as in other forms of communication, the essentially "prose" statement of the documentary film can achieve maximum effectiveness only in the full and masterful use of the "poetry" of fiction.

The great void in the *Brève Histoire* is that which should be filled by the aesthetic lesson to be drawn from any true history of the American movie: "You cannot serve God and Mammon." It is less a question, really, of the profit motive—it was Sam Johnson, not Sam Goldwyn, who said, "No one but a fool ever wrote a word except for pay"—than of accepting as overriding idols what are properly means to an end. The "personality" should exist to further the story; it ends absorbing and destroying the story. The over-lavish set inevitably absorbs precious minutes of movie time which belong by right only to story. So with every technological advance, from sound to the present afflictions of screen acreage.

Yet, as the *History* reminds us, every such advance does, after all, increase the potential scope of the film. Every such advance produces eventually the artist who can master it, resisting its temptation and impressing it firmly into his expanded vocabulary of film. The overwhelming fact about the *Brève Histoire* is that, with all the wasted effort, all the vulgarity and naiveté, all the unfortunate sociological effects, all the undoubted attacks on morality and all the bad art, the movies have also produced an amazing number of men who knew what to do and how to do it, and have, thereby, produced an amazing number of truly great films.

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THE SCREEN

LONG WAR

IN THE OLD days so many movies were called colossal that the adjective lost meaning. Now it has to be dug up again as the word most fitting for "War and Peace," which was magnificently produced in Italy. The Ponti-DeLaurentiis production, done on a grand scale, has an impressive cast of leading actors, a large cast of supporting players, thousands of extras (in the battle scenes photographed in Northern Italy there are 18,000 soldiers with 100,000 specially-made buttons on their striking early nineteenth-century French and Russian uniforms) and a story which, since it was based on Tolstoy's great and lengthy novel, is crowded with characters and incidents that wander far and wide to cover the whole of Life with a capital L. Most impressive of all of Jack Cardiff's cinematography in "War and Peace" are the battle scenes.

Fortunately, from the plethora of battles in the book the film makers have concentrated on three: Austerlitz (which the Russians lose and which is followed by an armistice), Borodino (which the Russians again lose and then fall back to follow their scorched earth policy so disastrous to the advancing French) and Berezina (which follows Napoleon's 1812 retreat from Moscow through mud and snow—and which the wily Russians win by routing and slaughtering the broken and demoralized French troops). Director King Vidor handled the battle at Borodino with a panoramic sweep equal to the best battle scenes of Griffith, Eisenstein or any of his own sequences in "The Big Parade." While the figure of Henry Fonda as the philosophic Pierre, wandering in civilian clothes over the field as the battle rages, is a little silly, it provides an excuse for the camera to give us a close view of war—a subject Pierre is scrutinizing along with happiness and love.

Of course the film concentrated on the second part of its title as much as on the first, but there is where it ran into trouble. The large number of writers who handled the difficult task of preparing a script from the complicated novel could drop some of the battles without great loss, but when they dropped some of Tolstoy's characters and adjusted others to the demands of cinema, they necessarily changed the emphasis.

Now Natasha is the main character, a somewhat shallow girl whose frivolities and attitudes are much more suitable to a Jane Austen movie than anything as epic as "War and Peace." While Audrey Hepburn plays the role with great beauty, Natasha herself never seems to grow. The film, running three and a half hours covers a span of many years: Natasha is awakened to love by Prince Andrey and then loses him for a while; she is smitten, without much motivation, by lecherous Anatole (Vittorio Gassman leers through this role) but Pierre drives him off; she is reunited with Andrey before his death; she survives the burning of Moscow and a dreadful war and then realizes her love for Pierre. But for all her suffering, she emerges at the end only slightly older, not much deeper except for a sense of efficiency she acquired during her experiences, and still looking like the beautiful, well-groomed girl Miss Hepburn is.

All the women in the picture are handsomely dressed: Anita Ekberg as Pierre's unfaithful wife; Milly Vitale as Andrey's wife who dies in childbirth; Anna Marie Ferrero as Andrey's sister; Lea Seidl as Natasha's thoughtful mother; but it is May Britt as Natasha's poor cousin who proves most lively and interesting.

The men come off somewhat better as characters in a story with a grand theme. While Henry Fonda is strangely American as an unhappy Russian, he is able to project growth and change. At the beginning a wastrel who glorifies Napoleon, he becomes at the end a settled and mature man who is disillusioned by war and anxious to put into practice some of the social reforms he learned through his suffering. In his best performance to date, Mel Ferrer portrays Prince Andrey as a dissatisfied man of wealth who finally learns his responsibilities. He suffers guilt for not having expressed his love for his dead wife and for hoping to find in the heroics of war an escape from life's problems. His death provides one of the film's most moving scenes —death being an awakening, an entrance "to my private monastery."

"War and Peace" has too few such moving scenes. While the film always holds one's interest, it seldom involves the audience in the action. We are touched when the Rostovs, Natasha's family who are likened to a family of gay, healthy, happy animals, suddenly take themselves seriously and decide to rescue wounded soldiers instead of their furniture. We are touched when Natasha goes to her first ball (beautifully staged) and discovers first love. We are touched when a simple peasant (John Mills) expresses his strong faith in God and has no fear of death. We are stirred when the great Napoleon (Herbert Lom) behaves like a petulant child when he finds there are no Russians in Moscow to surrender to him.

But as a whole, "War and Peace" is a cold and handsomely made epic that one watches from a comfortable distance without projecting oneself into the story. The characters in "Gone With the Wind," the American-made epic also concerned with the effects of war upon society, compelled our attention whether we liked them or not. Tolstoy's affection for his characters shines through "War and Peace," but unfortunately they fail to hold us. The splendid Technicolor photography of scenes like the duel between Fonda and

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Helmut Dantine (as a dissolute Russian officer), or the hunt on the Rostov estate, is exciting beyond compare, and the panoramas in VistaVision are first-rate; but the film has no more warmth than pictures in an art gallery. "War and Peace" is still a film to be seen, however, for its top-notch production, even though it excites little emotion as it asks: "What difference does it make if part of Poland is lost, or a piece of Austria changes hands?"

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

OF NOTE

CATHOLICS AND COMMUNITY

THE Christian Family Movement (100 West Monroe Street, Chicago 3, Ill.) has chosen "Social Harmony" as the theme for its inquiry program during the coming year. Excerpts from the introduction to the inquiry program are given below.

As recent Popes have pointed out, there are five areas in which lay people have the responsibility for bringing all things to Christ. These five areas are: Family, Social Life, Politics, Economics and International Life. Two additional areas are shared by lay people with the clergy. These are: Education and Parish Life.

Considering the timeliness and seriousness of the problems which face families in the area of social life, the committee decided to concentrate on this area first, and then to cover the entire seven areas in a series of programs over a three- to five-year period. CFM meetings have always dealt with crucial questions affecting family life in our own day. After weighing many subjects and themes for the year, the committee decided that the ideal theme for this year would be "social harmony," with special emphasis on two problems: youth and integration.

Headlines in our newspapers suggest how meaningful these questions are for us today. Hardly a day passes without a news story that is a fresh argument why we, as Christian families, must work for social harmony. We are applying the spirit of neighborliness not only to families in our own block but to relations between generations and between different racial (or nationality) groups among us. Such headlines bear testimony to the fact that there is discord between various groups in almost every community. In the United States, the most serious problem of social disharmony is caused by prejudice against Negroes. But Negroes are not the only victims of discrimination. In one community it may be Latin Americans, or Indians, or Chinese, or "poor whites."

Injustice, like the devil himself, can take many forms. In some areas it may be institutionalized by the compulsive power of government. In others, private groups—for example, real estate boards, labor unions, or employers—may take it upon themselves to "keep them in their place." Elsewhere the evil may lie simply in "unwritten law," that is, in customs encrusted by decades of tradition.

"Trouble" is not the only sign of injustice. The opposite may actually be true. "Trouble" usually means that one "side" or the other is making a protest. Generally a protest—the filing of a law suit to end segregation, for example—is a sign that things are changing or about to change.

For a Christian the presence or absence of "trouble" (an outward expression of protest or resistance) can never be the sole criterion of the moral health of his community. St. Paul, in his first Epistle to the Corinthians, explains the principle that should guide Christians: "For the body is not one member but many. And if one member suffers anything, all the members suffer with it. . . ."

A Catholic editor once wrote: "If charity is the bond that unites Christians, then racial injustice and hatred are the greatest social evil. They tear the body of Christ apart."

Catholic families, as members of the Mystical Body of Christ, have not only the right but the duty to concern themselves with this problem. Pope Pius XII called racism one of the "pernicious errors of our time" because it violates "that law of human solidarity and charity which is dictated and imposed by our common origin and by the equality of rational nature in all men, to whatever people they belong."

Again, the headlines indicate the seriousness of the youth problem, and also spotlight its most sensational side. But the negative approach of attacking "juvenile delinquency" is not enough. We must take the positive approach—finding ways for the Christ-like formation of our youth.

Again, we cannot rest content with the fact that in our community there is no youth "trouble"—no overt "juvenile delinquency." The problems of youth are many, and may come to the surface in odd ways. For example, the craving to "belong" may be so strong that youngsters may take up drinking to be like the others.

What if the couples in a particular group have only small children? Does this mean that the youth inquiries "don't apply"? Their own children—sooner or later—will become part of the "youth" age group, and parents should prepare for that day.

Beyond that personal reason, however, there is a more important one. Parents have responsibilities to the youth of their neighborhoods even though their own children may be too young or too old to be "pre-

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teen" or "teen-agers." This responsibility is implicitly recognized by the community when it taxes all property owners—with or without children—to pay for a school system and recreational facilities.

Young couples sometimes forget that their own youthfulness equips them to communicate well with teen-agers; young couples "have a way with the teen-agers" because they themselves are not many years removed from this age group.

Youngsters, after all, are neighbors too, and they have a contribution to make to the community. They have the energy and the zeal to create social harmony, just as they can contribute to the social discord that echoes in newspaper headlines.

COMMUNICATIONS

"REALITIES OF RELIGION"

Brooklyn, N.Y.

TO the Editors: It is hard to see how Dom Aelred Graham's undeveloped quotation, in "Realities of Religion" [Aug. 3], "When the ego has been forgotten, all problems end," escapes his own ban on "ministering to self-complacency."

In *The Spiritual Letters of Dom John Chapman, O.S.B.*, Sheed & Ward, Letter LXI explains that the all-problems-are-ended stage is an early one in which the soul feels good and says, "I feel I habitually am doing and suffering God's Will in everything." After a second stage of awakening fervor, Dom John quotes the soul as saying, *"Habitually* I perceive that I am *never* really doing and suffering God's Will except most miserably and imperfectly; and I am, therefore, habitually miserable about it." He comments: "This is clearly a far closer union than the first."

In Letter LXV, Abbot Chapman's criticism of another writer would seem to apply to Dom Aelred's quotation, which the American Benedictine feels "the people of the East have understood perhaps better than we of the West."

"He thinks we ought to aim at unclouded union with God in this life," the letter reads, "and he regards internal trials as our own fault. This is Stoicism, not Christianity. Our Lord chose to feel internal sufferings for our sakes and the culmination of them upon the Cross was the feeling of being forsaken by God. He is our model."

It might be replied that Dom John's "sufferings" do not come under the head of Dom Aelred's "problems," but that would surely deprive both words of much of their meaning.

PETER JEFFERY.

REPLY

Portsmouth, R.I.

TO the Editors: Mr. Jeffrey's concluding suspicion, that he may be tilting at windmills, is well-founded. One of Christianity's central lessons is that suffering selflessly borne, though the pain remains unabated, does not constitute a "problem"—that is to say, a situation by which the mind is baffled. Between Abbot Chapman and me there is no dispute: Our Lord is indeed "our model." He was oppressed by suffering but, precisely on account of the mental clarity arising from His God-centered selflessness, unvexed by any problem. The point could not be put more plainly than it is in the *Epistle to the Hebrews* (xii, 2): Jesus endured the Cross, despising shame, "for the joy that was set before Him."

(*Very Rev.*) AELRED GRAHAM, O.S.B.

"PUERTO RICANS IN NEW YORK"

New York, N.Y.

TO the Editors: Father Edward Dunne's letter [Aug. 3] about Father Illich's article, "Puerto Ricans in New York" [June 22], provides some valuable and instructive insights into the background of the Puerto Rican.

I hope, however, that readers of the letter will not allow it to obscure the main theme of Father Illich's article, which remains quite unshaken by the more adequate information provided by Father Dunne.

The point that Father Illich made, and it cannot be emphasized too much, is that Puerto Ricans are different from the immigrants who came to the City in previous generations; that, unless their differences are acknowledged and respected, we may blunder badly in our approach to this newest migration. Some of the statements used by Father Illich to illustrate these differences of the Puerto Ricans were helpfully qualified by Father Dunne. But the main point of the article is still as important as ever.

One important difference stressed by Father Illich was the fact that Puerto Ricans in New York may find themselves "tagged" as colored and thus experience a kind of discrimination they had not known in Puerto Rico. It is fortunate that Father Dunne in commenting on this called attention to the existence of discrimination in Puerto Rico, a thing which is often played down or overlooked, although it does neither us nor the Puerto Ricans any good to keep this in the dim background. I remember my own surprise when a pastor of one of Puerto Rico's churches explained to me that many of his parishioners complained strongly when in re-decorating his church he had an artist represent some of the angels as colored. What amazed me, however, was the fact that the Church was named

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after Our Lady of Montserrat, one of the Black Virgins of Spain. It seemed all right to represent Our Lady as black, but not the angels.

If Father Illich meant that color was no bar to marriage or social advancement in Puerto Rico, his statement would have to be qualified. But, in the context of the article, I think Father was trying to emphasize the fact that large numbers of Puerto Ricans who were never sensitive to color on the Island, become sensitive to color on the Mainland and are conscious to the lash of discrimination as they never knew it before they came here. Whether black or many shades of brown, they find themselves treated as "colored" in a society where color has quite a different social significance than it had for them in Puerto Rico. The 1950 Census reports 20% of the population in Puerto Rico as "non-white," and about 7.5% of the Puerto Rican population in New York as "non-white." This makes it appear that only a trifling percentage of Puerto Ricans in New York would be exposed to racial discrimination. Actually this does not represent the case at all. In designating color, the Census depends on the judgment of the enumerator, and, in this case, it is clear that only those who were obviously Negro were listed as non-white. All the rest are lumped together as white. This overlooks the large number of Puerto Ricans of all different shades who are not obviously Negro, but who may be treated as Negroes because they are not obviously white.

What is more, being treated as colored on the Mainland is quite different from being treated as colored on the Island. Color, in Puerto Rico, was traditionally the visible mark that distinguished those of pure Spanish lineage from all the rest. It was the crucial factor in a class distinction in which mobility to the higher class was out of the question for those of the lower class. In such a society, what barred the members of the lower class from association with the higher class did not bar them from association with each other, nor did it bar people of any shade from marriage, occupation, neighborhood or residence with those on their own level. It is when they come to the United States Mainland that Puerto Ricans become sensitive to the great significance of color as a barrier and a basis of discrimination on all levels of society. They learn that color is not a visible mark to distinguish a higher class from a lower; it is a visible mark that distinguishes the colored of all classes from even the humblest and lowest class of whites. This is what writers mean when they say that the Puerto Rican experiences a different kind of discrimination here than he has ever known before, and the experience can be bitter.

This analysis is obviously an oversimplification, as any brief discussion of race prejudice must be. People of the humblest and least respected status will always try to find something that will distinguish them as better than somebody else, and in a society where color is an issue, this becomes an easy norm by which people can claim some kind of superiority. This has probably been true of the lower class in Puerto Rico also. And when advancement to higher social and economic levels becomes possible, as it has become increasingly possible in Puerto Rico in the past few decades, the sensitiveness of lower class people to color differences increases accordingly.

But, regardless of these complications, it still remains true that one of the impressive characteristics of the Puerto Ricans coming to New York is their apparent lack of discrimination among the poorer classes, and even among many who have been advancing to middle class status here. At social gatherings, in visits among friends and families, in parish societies and activities, those of very dark color and even those who are Negro give the impression of being completely at home and accepted as they would rarely be in a similar gathering of whites of different ethnic backgrounds on the Mainland. Even casual observation convinces one that marriage between people of noticeably different shades of color is far more widespread among Puerto Ricans than it would be among non-Puerto Ricans in the United States. This is evidence enough that experience of the Mainland type of discrimination is a severe jolt to large numbers of them.

The result of this may be twofold: It is possible that prejudice, Mainland style, may be carried back to the Island, thus making the people of the poorer classes much more sensitive to color differences than they have been in the past. If they are at all fair of skin, they may be anxious to dissociate themselves from those who are dark. This would be a sad effect of the migration if it should happen to any great extent.

The other possibility is the one that most of us are praying and hoping for: that the indifference to color among the poorer Puerto Ricans who are coming here will be brought to the Mainland where it may modify considerably the prejudice based on color that exists here. The Puerto Ricans could thus mediate effectively in the mingling of Negro and white on the mainland. If this should occur, it would be one of the great and noble effects of the coming of the Puerto Ricans.

(*Rev.*) JOSEPH P. FITZPATRICK, S.J.,
Fordham University.

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Art Imitating Life in California Politics

THE NINTH WAVE. By Eugene Burdick. Houghton, Mifflin. $3.95.

By JOHN F. SULLIVAN

THE OBVIOUS consequence of ignoring ends and concentrating on means is to remove the subject under consideration from any relationship to morality. It is thus inaccurate to say, for example, that Machiavelli taught an immoral political doctrine; what he did was to divorce politics absolutely and irreparably from morality. It is as absurd, he would suggest, to demand that political means have a moral end as to demand that a chemical reaction obey moral laws.

The modern political scene has become Machiavellian in this most sinister sense. We no longer debate ends but means. We do not debate ends because we no longer think of political actions as having ends. Our problems, foreign and domestic, are problems of finding the appropriate means, the formulas that will "work." If we talk of ends at all, we talk of proximate ends, but even these are usually all subsumed in some vague label like "our American heritage."

In the light of what I have been saying, it should come as no surprise that one of the most realistic portraits of the American political scene in contemporary fiction should be the work of a writer who must thoroughly understand the real application of Machiavelli to the world. This portrait is presented in *The Ninth Wave,* a first novel by Eugene Burdick, who is a member of the political science faculty at the University of California.

There have been good American political novels before *The Ninth Wave.* Like it, they have frequently been obsessed with the outlines of the Huey Long affair. But in tracing the rise and fall of a political boss —not, after all, such a rare phenomenon in American political history—previous novelists have concentrated, as a novelist is expected to, on the motivation of the protagonist—the ends which he is consciously or unconsciously seeking.

The Ninth Wave, though it adopts this familiar plot structure, is therefore unique in that, while it carefully narrates the events of the hero's youth, education, and military career, it never does suggest for him any end whatever, conscious or unconscious. To make such a statement about a traditional novel would, of course, be to condemn it for a failure in characterization, but in *The Ninth Wave* it must be admitted that this is not a fault but a measure of the novel's success.

The divorce of politics from morals consequent upon such an absence of ends is also clearly depicted in *The Ninth Wave.* Professor Burdick's novel is, in fact, an exact illustration of Machiavelli's basic assumption of the hopelessly corrupt nature of man. Perhaps a more appropriate epigraph for the novel than the one actually used would have been these words from Machiavelli's *Discourses*: "In constituting and legislating for a commonwealth it must needs be taken for granted that all men are wicked and that they will always give vent to the malignity that is in their minds when opportunity offers."

It is true, as the epigraph actually chosen seems to imply, that the author cannot quite bring himself to make the Machiavellian thesis explicit. He imposes an ending in which his protagonist lets himself be destroyed, but this strikes me as a wholly contrived sop to our sentimental illusions. (It is, by the way, a testament to the quality of the craftsmanship displayed in this novel that so little else in the story seemed contrived—perhaps only the scene outside a South Pacific cathedral where the hero "rejects religion.")

There are two special considerations that I ought to mention as helping to explain, though they do not negate, the fundamental view of the book. One of these is the fact that the novel grew out of a study of irrational trends in politics. This, I think, is part of the reason why so many political events in the book seem to spring from sheer, unreasoning human animality. The other special consideration is that the scene is California, where, in politics at least, life imitates art, but the art is that of Hollywood.

But these considerations, while they may account for some extremes, do not give us the right to say, "We, at least, are not like that." For Professor Burdick has done what Machiavelli did: taken a close look at men and politics as they are. The result is a dazzlingly accurate image of contemporary politics, an image that represents the other forty-seven states as well as it does California. If we are to question Machiavelli or Professor Burdick at all, it must be on their reasoning that because this is the way men and politics *are,* this is the way they *have to be.*

For it must be admitted that in this imperfect world, peopled by men who have inherited a fallen nature, there will never be a perfect government. Fear and hatred, meanness and duplicity, corruption and vice are nothing new, in politics or anywhere else. Professor Burdick could have told his tale of someone as revered as Lincoln and still have found acts that were immoral, expedient, inspired by animal desires.

But what has really changed in the world—and changed recently, I think—is not the degree of the world's immorality, but our reaction to it. While the Christian heritage of the West had still some vigor, though immoral acts were of course committed, they were committed with some sense, on the part of public figure and populace alike, that they *were* immoral acts and that their consequences might not safely be ignored.

I have said that *The Ninth Wave* is realistic. It is so not in the photographic sense of accuracy in voluminous detail, but because it so faithfully renders a total image of

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the American condition I have been describing. It is not, of course, ultimately a great novel. Its value is not as literature, but in that it could serve—as did another novel of little literary merit, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*—to enkindle moral fervor. If Professor Burdick and Machiavelli are, at the last, in error, if men are not hopelessly corrupt, such a renewal of our moral sense must come quickly, for we seem blithely about to exploit a means that may all too literally make an end.

Pain of Loss

A CERTAIN SMILE. By Françoise Sagan. E. P. Dutton. $2.95.

By ANNE FREMANTLE

NOTHING differentiates nations so clearly one from another as do the things they take seriously. The Americans, for example, take baseball and domestic politics; the Germans, war and music; the British, foreign affairs and gardening; the Russians, chess and metaphysics; the French, cooking and passion.

Miss Sagan's second story, as deceptively simple as her first, and written in that quiet, uncluttered prose that she has now perfected at the age of twenty, and with an economy and skill most writers wish they could achieve at three times her age, is an admirable example of this Gallic concern with Passion. Passion, be it noted, and not sex. (O, that Freud were all!) "Sensuality was not the keynote" she spells out, "but . . . that pane of glass called passion" which "may distort at times" but "is wonderfully convenient."

Miss Sagan's first-person heroine, Dominique, a fortnight before her Sorbonne exams, is mildly bored by her first lover, Bertrand. He takes her to lunch with his traveled uncle, Luc, who has gray eyes and a tired, somewhat sad, expression. Dominique thinks to herself, "he's just the kind that seduces little girls like me"—a sound prediction. His warm, blonde wife mothers Dominique: the four make an unlikely quartette for most of the summer. Bertrand, Dominique's lover, who does push-ups before breakfast, is jealous; Luc's wife, Françoise, is not. Dominique and Luc, after discussing having an affair at length, have one briefly—for two weeks in September in Cannes. They return to Paris; Bertrand has already been told about the affair by a friend of Dominique; Françoise learns from a quondam admirer who has seen Luc and Dominique together in Cannes. When Luc goes to America for a month, Dominique learns what ails her: she is in love. "This is me, Dominique. I love Luc who doesn't love me." By the time he comes back, she has grown up: "Without cease then the battle began. Memory and imagination were ferocious enemies . . . and, without cease, the revolt of my body, which needed sleep; of my intelligence, which was sickened by the whole performance." This is adult language and mature experience; indeed, for every step of her way, Dominique travels a

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royal road, albeit dusty: *nondum amabam, et amare amabam, amare amans*. So, at the same age as Dominique, wrote another university student, in the high noon of his flesh, at Carthage.

At one level, this is a clear, concise account of a hierarchic situation. A young girl, having left in *Bonjour Tristesse* the Freudian safety of her father's love, is bored and in *A Certain Smile* finds "in some men . . . a vigor far beyond these boys," her contemporaries. As the young mistress of a tired, aging intellectual, bored with life as she is, she finds again the father she has only recently left. At no moment does Luc fall in love with Dominique; but the moment when she falls in love with him is the moment when she begins to escape him. For by suffering, by learning to feel, not just pleasure or pity, but a beginning of real compassion, Dominique grows "with the body, through the body, beyond the body," as Augustine has memorably described the process.

On the fifteenth day after Luc's return (he has not yet called her once) Dominique wakes to hear a lovely *andante* of Mozart that "always called up dawn, death, a certain smile." As a result, she feels "rather happy." That day Luc does call, and she realizes she is once more alone. And concludes: "Well, what did it matter? I was a woman who had loved a man. It was a simple story." Heinrich Heine, the German poet, put it in almost identical words:

"This is an ancient story/That yet is ever new/but whenever again it happens/The heart just breaks in two."

Miss Sagan has caught most deftly that unique moment when the pain of loss begins the purgation. In *Bonjour Tristesse* Miss Sagan gave us attrition, a sense of the utter futility of the sensual life, one dreary affair after another ending in gigolos and their keepers; here we have the possibility of an exit. At no moment has she made the mistake, either as a writer or a psychologist, of thinking that anything less than the inevitable can happen.

Puritan's Eye

THE SAILOR, SENSE OF HUMOR, AND OTHER STORIES. By V. S. Pritchett. Knopf. $4.50.

By ANTHONY BAILEY

WE GET to know the Sailor of Mr. Pritchett's title story very quickly after these first lines: "He was lifting his knees high and putting his hand up, when I first saw him, as if, crossing the road through that stringing rain, he were breaking through the bead curtain of a Pernambuco bar." He is lost and alone in London. He approaches the narrator as, in the rain, "the electric signs were printing off the advertisements and daubing them on the wet road." "Coatless, with a smudged trilby hat on the back of his head so that a curl of boot-polish black hair glistened with raindrops over his forehead, he stood there squeezing the water in his boots and looking at me, from his bilious eyes, like a man drowning and screaming for help in two feet of water and wondering why the crowd is laughing."

Mr. Pritchett has what he says Dickens has, and which, in the same way, he makes a virtue—the almost fatal eye for eccentricity. It is the puritan's eye, lighting quickly on any extravagance of form or gesture. It is the piercing glance of an isolated man, which, with a transferred fanaticism, pins down the symptoms of isolation in others. One quotes Mr. Pritchett the critic more readily in the case of Mr. Pritchett the short-story writer, because the enthusiasm which illuminates his "Books in General" essays in the *New Statesman* gives also a particular quality to these stories.

He is that, then, both puritan and enthusiast. As he writes about Edmund Gosse, "extreme puritanism gives purpose, drama, and intensity to private life." For the puritan, "what a series of dramatic climaxes his life is, what a fascinating casuistry beguiles him, how he is bemused by the comedies of duplicity, sharpened by the ingenious puzzles of conscience, and carried away by the eloquence of hypocrisy."

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Approach to Politics, V

If it can be said that The Commonweal operates according to any political dogma, it is the right to take a fresh look at things periodically, to make all judgments tentative and to consider the total political situation, expecting the inevitable moral ambiguities, and then make a pragmatic judgment which does no violence to basic moral principles, though often the judgment—as long as politics remains in the sinful hands of men and not angels—will be not ideal but merely the lesser of two evils. Someone has said that politics consists in making a constant series of lesser-evil choices . . . if one waits for the "ideal" and demands simon-pure conditions before taking any political step, he will be paralyzed into inaction, or, he will join the angry Utopians.

As Catholics, the editors of The Commonweal look for guidance to the social and political principles which are to be found in the papal encyclicals. . . . But it has been our contention that the principles are not meant to be wrapped up in pretty words and then put aside. Some applications are obvious.

It is difficult, for instance, to see how any Catholic can consistently oppose the UN and every possible manifestation of the international spirit and still pay lip service to the recent papal directives. . . . The area of proper disagreement between Catholics is wide indeed, but we feel that the Catholic publicist simply cannot leave the papal peace program in a pious rhetorical vacuum. —The Commonweal, February 5, 1954

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tan perception, just as it resides inherent in Mr. Pritchett's imagery. If there is a complaint, it is similar to that we would make of the Calvinist preacher with his fire and brimstone: the complaint that by a certain exaggeration of essentials, some characters in these stories are predestined. We know where they're going. They are the occasional fatalities of this recognition of eccentricity. We are seduced into an intolerance, a cold picture of what sort of person a man is. We are forced to a definite judgment and, in judging, we lose that haze, that aura of slight doubt the Russian writers knew so well how to leave around their characters, and which exists around living people, no matter how well we think we know them.

Yet to carp at what we might call a lack of aloofness is perhaps to demand something that can hardly be done in half-a-dozen pages. Certainly Mr. Pritchett turns the tables on us often enough and, instead of the limits, we are amazed by the virtues of this style. He has led us to make up our minds. We have been completely taken in; and then, with a shock, we realize we have been very wrong. This or that person is not like that at all. The method depends to a great extent on the shock itself, on the way our conscience reacts. Just as the citizens of a pub are fooled by the old thief in "The Aristocrat," so we are shown and startled by the climaxes of conscience created when a character who has been put in high relief by a group of characters, abruptly sets them in relief themselves, fully aware of their responsibility.

And how well he illustrates 'the ingenious puzzles'! One, seemingly slight, story is called "The Voice." A London church has been bombed and, still alive but buried in the crypt, is Morgan, an unfrocked Welsh minister and a previous parson of the church. Among the rescue party stands the present parson, also a Welshman. For him Morgan has always been a blasphemous, diabolical man. The rescue party are given their sense of direction in digging by the singing of Morgan as he lies

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somewhere beneath the ruins. "The voice . . . . went on, rich, virile, masculine, from verse to verse of the hymn. Shooting up like a stem through the rubbish the voice seemed to rise and branch out powerfully, luxuriantly, and even theatrically, like a tree, until everything was in its shade. It was a shade that came toward one like dark arms." Against his better nature (the cliché is theologically ironic) Lewis dives into the ruins, at great risk, to look for Morgan, still hating him as the embodiment of Hell. The metamorphosis of Lewis, the 'redemption' of Morgan, comes in the natural tension of the crypt: falling props, Morgan's bottle of whisky, Lewis's ruined suit, Morgan's hymn. "The Voice" demonstrates another tension as well: that between reader and story, as we are hit by the people in it, pushed away, and then drawn in again. For a moment Pritchett's characters, more than life-size in their instantaneous effect on us, are overwhelming. His is the melodrama of the sudden view which ceases to be melodramatic because it is original, particular, momentous. "Things happen" in these stories. At the least, they install in our imaginations a clear, Breughel-like picture. Moreover, one learns and one accepts the lesson as natural. The way the waiting crowd, in "its passive anger," looks on as the rescue party digs. The conversation in pubs and sitting rooms. The furniture of counting houses and shops. Social pressure, shame, snobbery, jealousy, business competition, drink, money, food—all in exact context, the whole emotional habitat of lower- and middle-class England.

Often the nature of his achievement is obscured by the feeling he arouses, by the proximity of his characters. The quiet ecstasy of Chekov and the aggressive poetry of Lawrence are nothing similar. Mr. Pritchett has that gift which Lawrence singularly lacked: humor, even the sort which is tearful. The latter can be found in "The Scapegoat"; the former, plain and unvarnished, in "Oedipus Complex." That no one could ever handle a visit to a dentist like this before is to be expected, because no one has ever had a dentist like Mr. Pollfax. He is all dentists and Mr. Pollfax besides: "Dogged, with its slight suggestion of doggish, was the word for Mr. Pollfax. He was a short man, jaunty, hair going thin, with jaunty buttocks and a sway to his walk. He had two lines, from habitual grinning, cut deep from the nostrils, and scores of lesser lines like the fine hair of a bird's nest round his eyes. There was something innocent, heroic, and determined about Mr. Pollfax, something of the English Tommy in tin-hat and full pack going up the line. He suggested in a quiet way—war."

We are presented these days with so many whimsical, defiant, sensitive stories, so much of the type which begin, "One of the few happy moments of my distraught childhood . . ." or which detail, through a child's eyes, the death-in-love of nearly divorced parents, that there is an added excellence in these of Mr. Pritchett's, who is, to distort his own phrase on Victor Hugo, a grand impressario of personality. He has seen that, for the aware man, a good deal of the enjoyment and humor of life, as well as its seriousness, lies in the extraordinariness of human beings. One stands no risk of confusing any one character in this book with any of the others.

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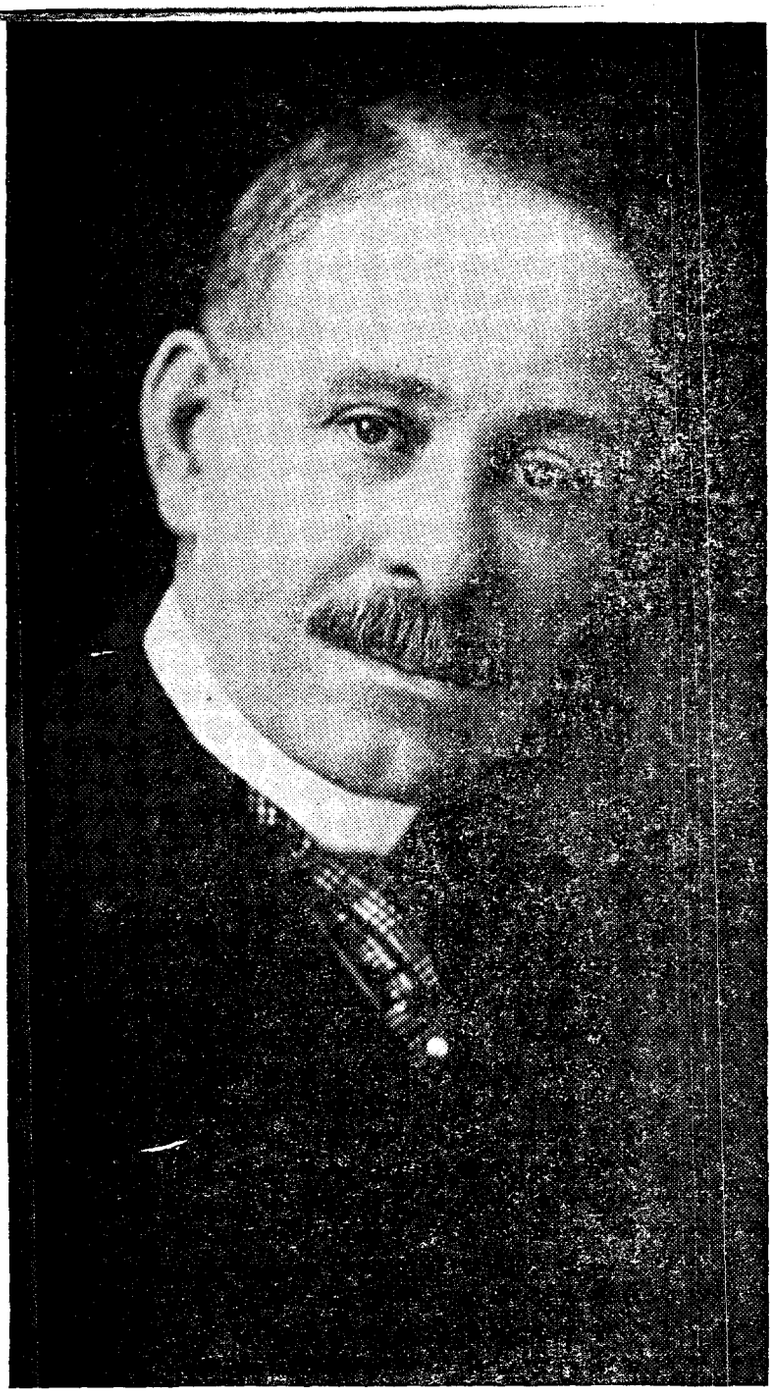

DIAGNOSIS: knife wound in the heart

UNDER THE blazing blue sledge hammer of a Chicago heat wave, the cramped, makeshift operating room shimmered like an oven, reeking of ether and carbolic. Six sweat-drenched, frock-coated doctors huddled in fascination, watching deft hands reach into a human chest and expertly stitch up a wound in the redness of a pulsing heart.

Would he live? The surgeon mopped his brow and hoped. The year was 1893; the operation, fantastic.

Live? Yes, he would live for many more years, thanks to the skill and courage of Dr. Daniel Hale Williams.

Abandoned as a child, Williams, a Negro, had struggled hard for his medical education. Now only 37, he had already founded America's first interracial hospital, Provident. And here he had just performed the first of the pioneering operations that would mark him as one of our country's great surgeons.

Sensitive and brave, Daniel Hale Williams was blessed with an abundance of the same urge to help his fellow man that binds and strengthens Americans today.

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